



LOPHOLAIMUS ANTARCTICUS: G.R. Gray

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Top-knot Pigeon.

Columba antarctica, Shaw, Zool. of New Holl., pl. 5.

Columba dilopha, Temm. in Linn. Trans., vol. xiii. p. 124, and Pl. Col. 162.—Shaw, Gen. Zool., vol. xiv. p. 279.

—Wagl. Syst. Av., sp. 11.

Lophorhynchus dilophus, Swains. Class. of Birds, vol. ii. p. 348.

————— *antarcticus*, G. R. Gray, List of Gen. of Birds, 1st Edit., p. 58.

Lopholaimus antarcticus, G. R. Gray, Ibid. Appendix to 2nd Edit., p. 12.

Top-knot Pigeon of the Colonists of New South Wales.

ALTHOUGH the specific term of *antarcticus* is not an appropriate appellation for this noble Pigeon, still it cannot, I think, with strict propriety be sunk into a synonym, since it was first applied to it in a work intended exclusively to illustrate the zoology of New Holland, as will be seen on reference to the synonyms above quoted. I feel assured that my excellent and scientific friend M. Temminck was either unacquainted with the publication alluded to, or that the circumstance of its having been previously described and figured had escaped his memory, when he characterized this bird in the thirteenth volume of the "Linnean Transactions," and subsequently figured it in his "Planches Coloriées," under the name of *Columba dilopha*.

I have not yet seen specimens of this Pigeon from the northern or western coast, and it appears to be exclusively confined to the rich and luxuriant districts of the southern and eastern portions of Australia; being particularly abundant in the brushes of Illawarra, the Hunter, the Clarence, &c., where the trees furnish it at all seasons with a plentiful supply of food. So entirely arboreal are its habits, that I never once saw it descend to the ground, or even to the low shrub-like trees. It is strictly gregarious, often traversing the forests in flocks of many hundreds in search of those trees most laden with its favourite fruit; upon discovering which the entire flock alight simultaneously with a rushing noise, clinging to and bearing down the smaller twigs and branches with their weight, for grasping which their broad, hand-like feet seem peculiarly fitted. It is a bird of very powerful flight, and usually flies at a considerable elevation in flocks closely packed together.

Among other substances found in the stomachs of those specimens I dissected, were the wild-fig and the large round berries of the cabbage-palm; and in all probability it also feeds upon other fruits of a still larger size, as its bill and throat are capable of being dilated to such an extent as to admit of a substance as large as a walnut being swallowed entire.

Its flesh is not so good as that of the other members of its family inhabiting Australia, being coarse and dry-eating.

I had no opportunity of observing its nidification, neither could I obtain any information on the subject.

The sexes are alike in plumage, and may be thus described:—

Crest over the nostrils, sides of the head, neck, breast, and under surface silvery grey, the feathers of the neck and breast being hackled, and admitting the darker colouring of their bases to be perceived through the interstices; elongated crest at the occiput rust-red; from the eye to the occiput beneath the crest a line of black, which, meeting behind, is continued for a short distance down the back of the neck; all the upper surface dark slate-grey; primaries, secondaries, and edge of the wing black; tail light grey at the base, black for the remainder of its length, crossed by an irregular band of buffy grey about an inch from the extremity; irides fiery orange, surrounded by a lash of pink-red, and seated in a bare mealy space of the same colour, but hardly so bright; bill bright rose-red, inclining to lilac at the tip; fleshy part covering the nostrils and at the base of the lower mandible, greenish lead-colour in the male, and lead-colour in the female; feet purplish red; back of the tarsi and sole of the feet greyish brown.

The figure is of the natural size.